A PROJECT FOR THE Advancement of Religion, AND THE *Reformation of Manners.*

By a Person of QUALITY.

O quisquis volet impias
Cædes, & rabiem tollere civicam:
Si quæret pater urbium
Subscribi statuis, indomitam audeat
Refrænare licentiam. Hor.

LONDON:
Printed for *Benj. Tooke*, at the *Middle-Temple-Gate* in *Fleet-street*. M. DCC. IX.

BRITISH MUSEUM

A PROJECT FOR THE Advancement of Religion, AND THE *Reformation of Manners.*

TO THE

Countess of *Berkeley.*

Madam,

MY Intention in prefixing Your Ladyship's Name, is not, after the common Form, to desire Your Protection of the following Papers; which I take

to be a very unreaſonable Requeſt; ſince by being inſcribed to Your Ladyſhip, tho' without Your Knowledge, and from a concealed Hand, You cannot recommend them without ſome Suſpicion of Partiality. My real Deſign is, I confeſs, the very ſame I have often deteſted in moſt Dedications; That of Publiſhing Your Praiſes to the World. Not upon the Subject of Your noble Birth, for I know others as Noble; or of the Greatneſs of Your Fortune, for I know others far greater; or of that beautiful Race (the Images of their Parents) which calls You Mother: For even this may perhaps have been equall'd in ſome other Age or Country. Beſides, none of theſe Advantages do derive any Accompliſhments to the Owners, but ſerve at beſt only to adorn what they really poſſeſs. What I intend, is Your Piety, Truth, Good Senſe, and

and good Nature, Affability, and Charity; wherein I wish Your Ladyship had many Equals, or any Superiors; and I wish I could say I knew them too, for then Your Ladyship might have had a Chance to escape this Address. In the mean time, I think it highly necessary for the Interest of Virtue and Religion that the whole Kingdom should be informed in some Parts of Your Character: For Instance; that the easyest and politest Conversation, joyn'd with the truest Piety, may be observed in Your Ladyship in as great Perfection as they were ever seen apart in any other Persons. That by Your Prudence and Management under several Disadvantages, You have preserv'd the Lustre of that most Noble Family into which You are grafted, and which the unmeasurable Profusion of Ancestors for many Generations had

too

too much eclypſed. Then, how happily You perform every Office of Life to which Providence hath called You: In the Education of thoſe two incomparable Daughters, whoſe Conduct is ſo univerſally admir'd; in every Duty of a prudent, complying, affectionate Wife; in that Care which deſcends to the meaneſt of Your Domeſticks; and laſtly, in that Endleſs Bounty to the Poor, and Diſcretion where to diſtribute it. I inſiſt on my Opinion, that it is of Importance for the Publick to know this and a great deal more of Your Ladyſhip; yet whoever goes about to inform them, ſhall inſtead of finding Credit, perhaps be cenſured for a Flatterer. To avoid ſo uſual a Reproach, I declare this to be no Dedication, but properly an Introduction to a Propoſal for the Advancement of Religion and Morals, by tracing, however imperfect-

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ly, ſome few Lineaments in the Character of a Lady who hath ſpent all her Life in the Practice and Promotion of both.

AMONG all the Schemes offered to the Publick in this projecting Age, I have obſerved with ſome Diſpleaſure, that there have never been any for the Improvement of Religion and Morals: Which beſide the Piety of the Deſign from the Conſequences of ſuch a Reformation in a future Life, would be the beſt natural Means for advancing the Publick Felicity of the State, as well as the preſent Happyneſs of every Individual. For, as much as Faith and Morality are declined among us, I am altogether confident, they might in a ſhort Time, and with no very great Trouble be raiſed to as high a Perfection as Numbers are capable of receiving. Indeed the

Method

Method is so easy and obvious, and some present Opportunities so good, that in order to have this Project reduced to Practice, there seems to want nothing more than to put those in mind who by their Honour, Duty, and Interest are chiefly concerned.

BUT because it is Idle to propose Remedies before we are assur'd of the Disease, or to be in Pain 'till we are convinced of the Danger; I shall first shew in general, that the Nation is extreamly corrupted in Religion and Morals; and then I will offer a small Scheme for the Reformation of both.

AS to the First; I know it is reckoned but a Form of Speech when Divines complain of the Wickedness of the Age: However, I believe, upon a fair Comparison with

with other Times and Countries, it would be found an undoubted Truth.

FOR, First; To deliver nothing but plain Matter of Fact without Exaggeration or Satyr; I ſuppoſe it will be granted, that hardly one in a hundred among our People of Quality or Gentry, appears to act by any Principle of Religion; That great Numbers of them do entirely diſcard it, and are ready to own their Disbelief of all Revelation in ordinary Diſcourſe. Nor is the Caſe much better among the Vulgar, eſpecially in great Towns, where the Prophaneneſs and Ignorance of Handicrafts-men, ſmall Traders, Servants, and the like, are to a Degree very hard to be imagined greater. Then, it is obſerved abroad, that no Race of Mortals hath ſo little Senſe of Re-

ligion as the *Engliſh* Soldiers; to confirm which, I have been often told by great Officers in the Army, that in the whole Compaſs of their Acquaintance, they could not collect three of their Profeſſion, who ſeemed to regard or believe one Syllable of the Goſpel: And the ſame at leaſt may be affirmed of the Fleet. The Conſequences of all which upon the Actions of Men are equally manifeſt. They never go about, as in former Times, to hide or palliate their Vices, but expoſe them freely to View like any other common Occurrences of Life, without the leaſt Reproach from the World or themſelves. For inſtance; any Man will tell you, he intends to be drunk this Evening, or was ſo laſt Night, with as little Ceremony or Scruple, as he would tell you the Time of the Day. He will let you know he is going to a Whore, or

that

that he has got a Clap, with as much Indifferency as he would a Piece of Publick News. He will ſwear, curſe, or blaſpheme without the leaſt Paſſion or Provocation. And, though all regard for Reputation is not quite laid aſide in the other Sex, 'tis however at ſo low an Ebb, that very few among them ſeem to think Virtue and Conduct of abſolute Neceſſity for preſerving it. If this be not ſo, how comes it to paſs, that Women of tainted Reputations find the ſame Countenance and Reception in all Publick Places, with thoſe of the niceſt Virtue, who pay, and receive Viſits from them without any manner of Scruple; which Proceeding, as it is not very old among us, ſo I take it to be of moſt pernicious Conſequence: It looks like a ſort of compounding between Virtue and Vice, as if a Woman were allowed to be

Vicious, provided she be not profligate; as if there were a certain Point where Gallantry ends, and Infamy begins, or that a hundred Criminal Amours were not as pardonable as half a Score.

BESIDE those Corruptions already mentioned, it would be Endless to Enumerate such as arise from the Excess of Play, or Gaming: The Cheats, the Quarrels, the Oaths and Blasphemyes among the Men: Among the Women, the Neglect of Houshold Affairs, the Unlimited Freedoms, the Undecent Passion; And lastly, the known Inlet to all Lewdness, when after an ill Run, the *Person* must answer the Defects of the *Purse*: The Rule on such Occasions holding true in Play as it does in Law; *Quod non habet in Crumena, luat in Corpore.*

BUT all these are Trifles in Comparison, if we step into other Scenes, and consider the Fraud and Cousinage of Trading-men and Shopkeepers; that insatiable Gulph of Injustice and Oppression, the *Law*. The open Traffick of all Civil and Military Employments, (I wish it rested there) without the least Regard to Merit or Qualifications: The corrupt Management of Men in Office; the many detestable Abuses in chusing those who represent the People, with the Management of Interest and Factions among the Representatives. To which I must be bold to add the Ignorance among some of the Lower Clergy; the mean servile Temper of others; the pert Pragmatical Demeanor of several young Stagers in Divinity, upon their first producing themselves into the World; with many other

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Circumſtances needleſs, or rather invidious to mention; which falling in with the Corruptions already related, have, however unjuſtly, almoſt render'd the whole Order contemptible.

THIS is a ſhort View of the general Depravities among us, without entring into particulars, which would be an endleſs Labour. Now, as univerſal and deep rooted as theſe appear to be, I am utterly deceived, if an effectual Remedy might not be applied to moſt of them; neither am I at preſent upon a wild ſpeculative Project, but ſuch a one as may be eaſily put in Execution.

FOR, While the Prerogative of giving all Employment continues in the Crown, either immediately, or by Subordination; it is in the Power of the *Prince* to make Piety and Vir-

tue

tue become the Faſhion of the Age, if at the ſame time he would make them neceſſary Qualifications for Favour and Preferment.

IT is clear from preſent Experience, that the bare Example of the beſt Prince, will not have any mighty Influence where the Age is very corrupt. For, when was there ever a better Prince on the Throne than the preſent Queen? I do not talk of Her Talent for Government, Her Love of the People, or any other Qualities that are purely Regal; but Her Piety, Charity, Temperance, Conjugal Love, and whatever other Virtues do beſt adorn a private Life; wherein without Queſtion or Flattery, She hath no Superior: Yet neither will it be Satyr or peeviſh Invective to affirm, that Infidelity and Vice are not much diminiſhed ſince Her coming to the Crown, nor will,

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in all Probability, 'till ſome more effectual Remedies be provided.

THUS human Nature ſeems to lie under this Diſadvantage, that the Example alone of a vicious Prince will in time corrupt an Age, but That of a good One will not be ſufficient to reform it, without further Endeavours. Princes muſt therefore ſupply this Defect by a vigorous Exercíſe of that Authority which the Law has left them, by making it every Man's Intereſt and Honour to cultivate Religion and Virtue, by rendring Vice a Diſgrace, and the certain Ruin to Preferment or Pretenſions: All which they ſhould firſt attempt in their own Courts and Families. For inſtance; Might not the Queen's Domeſticks of the middle and lower Sort, be obliged upon Penalty of Suſpenſion or Loſs of their Employments, to a conſtant

Weekly

Weekly Attendance at leaſt, on the Service of the Church; to a decent Behaviour in it; to receive the Sacrament Four Times in the Year; to avoid Swearing and irreligious prophane Diſcourſe; and to the Appearance at leaſt, of Temperance and Chaſtity? Might not the Care of all this be committed to the ſtrict Inſpection of proper Perſons? Might not thoſe of higher Rank and nearer Acceſs to Her Majeſty's Perſon, receive Her own Commands to the ſame Purpoſe, and be countenanced or diſfavoured according as they obey? Might not the Queen lay Her Injunctions on the Biſhops, and other great Perſons of undoubted Piety, to make diligent Enquiry, to give Her Notice, if any Perſon about Her ſhould happen to be of Libertine Principles or Morals? Might not all thoſe who enter upon any Office in Her Majeſty's Family, be

obliged to take an Oath parallel with That againſt Simony, which is adminiſtred to the Clergy? 'Tis not to be doubted, but that if theſe or the like Proceedings were duly obſerved, Morality and Religion would ſoon become faſhionable Court Virtues; and be taken up as the only Methods to get or keep Employments there; which alone would have mighty Influence upon many of the Nobility, and principal Gentry.

BUT, If the like Methods were purſued as far as poſſible with regard to thoſe who are in the great Employments of the State, it is hard to conceive how general a Reformation it might in time produce among us. For, if Piety and Virtue were once reckoned Qualifications neceſſary for Preferment; every Man thus endowed, when put into great Stations, would readily imitate the

Queen's

Queen's Example in the Diſtribution of all Offices in his Diſpoſal; eſpecially if any apparent Tranſgreſſion thro' Favour or Partiality, would be imputed to him for a Miſdemeanor, by which he muſt certainly forfeit his Favour and Station: And there being ſuch great Numbers in Employment, ſcatter'd through every Town and County in this Kingdom; if all theſe were exemplary in the Conduct of their Lives, Things would ſoon take a new Face, and Religion receive a mighty Encouragement: Nor would the publick Weal be leſs advanced; ſince, of Nine Offices in Ten that are ill executed, the Defect is not in Capacity or Underſtanding, but in common Honeſty. I know no Employment for which Piety diſqualifies any Man; and if it did, I doubt, the Objection would not be very ſeaſonably offered at preſent: Becauſe, it is perhaps too

juſt a Reflection, that in the Diſpoſal of Places, the Queſtion whether a Perſon be *fit* for what he is recommended, is very often the laſt that is thought on, or regarded.

I HAVE often imagined, that ſomething parallel to the Office of Cenſors antiently in *Rome*, would be of mighty Uſe among us, and could be eaſily limited from running into any Exorbitancies. The *Romans* underſtood Liberty at leaſt as well as we, were as jealous of it, and upon every Occaſion as bold Aſſertors. Yet I do not remember to have read any great Complaints of the Abuſes in that Office among them; but many admirable Effects of it are left upon Record. There are ſeveral pernicious Vices frequent and notorious among us, that eſcape or elude the Puniſhment of any Law we have yet invented, or have had no

Law

Law at all againſt them; ſuch as Atheiſm, Drunkenneſs, Fraud, Avarice, and ſeveral others, which by this Inſtitution wiſely regulated, might be much reformed. Suppoſe for inſtance, that itinerary Commiſſioners were appointed to inſpect every where throughout the Kingdom, into the Conduct (at leaſt) of Men in Office, with reſpect to their Morals and Religion as well as their Abilities; To receive the Complaints and Informations that ſhould be offered againſt them, and make their Report here upon Oath, to the Court or the Miniſtry, who ſhould reward or puniſh accordingly. I avoid entring into the Particulars of this or any other Scheme, which coming from a private Hand, might be liable to many Defects, but would ſoon be digeſted by the Wiſdom of the Nation: And ſurely, Six thouſand Pounds a Year would not be ill laid

laid out among as many Commiſſioners duly qualified, who in Three Diviſions ſhould be perſonally obliged to take their yearly Circuits for that Purpoſe.

BUT this is beſide my preſent Deſign, which was only to ſhew what Degree of Reformation is in the Power of the Queen, without Interpoſition of the Legiſlature, and which Her Majeſty is without Queſtion obliged in Conſcience to endeavour by Her Authority, as much as She does by Her Practice.

IT will be eaſily granted, that the Example of this great Town hath a mighty Influence over the whole Kingdom; and it is as manifeſt, that the Town is equally influenced by the Court and the Miniſtry, and thoſe who by their Employments or their Hopes depend upon

upon them. Now, if under ſo excellent a Prince as the preſent Queen, we would ſuppoſe a Family ſtrictly regulated as I have above propoſed; a Miniſtry, where every ſingle Perſon was of diſtinguiſht Piety; if we would ſuppoſe all great Offices of State and Law filled after the ſame Manner, and with ſuch as were equally diligent in chuſing Perſons who in their ſeveral Subordinations would be obliged to follow the Examples of their Superiors, under the Penalty of Loſs of Favour and Place; Will not every Body grant that the Empire of Vice, and Irreligion would be ſoon deſtroyed in this great Metropolis, and receive a terrible Blow through the whole Iſland, which hath ſo great an Intercourſe with it, and ſo much affects to follow it's Faſhions.

FOR,

FOR, If Religion were once underſtood to be the neceſſary Step to Favour and Preferment; can it be imagined that any Man would openly offend againſt it, who had the leaſt Regard for his Reputation or his Fortune? There is no Quality ſo contrary to any Nature, which Men cannot affect and put on upon Occaſion, in order to ſerve an Intereſt, or gratify a prevailing Paſſion. The proudeſt Man will perſonate Humility, the moroſeſt learn to flatter, the lazyeſt will be ſedulous and active, where he is in purſuit of what he has much at Heart; How ready therefore would moſt Men be to ſtep into the Paths of Virtue and Piety, if they infallibly led to Favour and Fortune.

IF Swearing and Prophaneneſs, ſcandalous and avowed Lewdneſs, exceſſive

exceſſive Gaming and Intemperance were a little diſcountenanced in the Army, I cannot readily ſee what ill Conſequences could be apprehended; if Gentlemen of that Profeſſion were at leaſt obliged to ſome external Decorum in their Conduct; or even if a profligate Life and Character were not a Means of Advancement, and the Appearance of Piety a moſt infallible Hindrance, it is impoſſible the Corruptions there ſhould be ſo univerſal and exorbitant. I have been aſſured by ſeveral great Officers, that no Troops abroad are ſo ill diſciplined as the *Engliſh*, which cannot well be otherwiſe, while the common Soldiers have perpetually before their Eyes the vicious Example of their Leaders; and it is hardly poſſible for thoſe to commit any Crime, whereof theſe are not infinitely more guilty, and with leſs Temptation.

IT is commonly charged upon the Gentlemen of the Army, that the beaſtly Vice of drinking to Exceſs, hath been lately from their Example reſtored among us; which for ſome Years before, was almoſt dropt in *England*. But, whoever the Introducers were, they have ſucceeded to a Miracle; many of the young Nobility and Gentry are already become great Proficients, and are under no Manner of Concern to hide their Talent, but are got beyond all Senſe of Shame or Fear of Reproach.

THIS might ſoon be remedied, if the Queen would think fit to declare, that no young Perſon of Quality whatſoever, who were notoriouſly addicted to that or any other Vice, ſhould be capable of Her Favour, or even admitted into Her Preſence; with poſitive Command

to

to Her Miniſters and others in great Office, to treat them in the ſame Manner; after which, all Men who had any Regard for their Reputation, or any Proſpect of Preferment, would avoid their Commerce. This would quickly make Vice ſo ſcandalous, that thoſe who could not ſubdue, would at leaſt endeavour to diſguiſe it.

BY the like Methods, a Stop might be put to that ruinous Practice of deep Gaming; and the Reaſon why it prevails ſo much, is becauſe a Treatment *directly oppoſite* in every Point is made uſe of to promote it; by which Means, the Laws made againſt this Abuſe are wholly eluded.

IT cannot be denied that the Want of ſtrict Diſcipline in the Univerſities, hath been of pernicious Conſequence to the Youth of this Na-

tion, who are there almoſt left entirely to their own Management, eſpecially thoſe among them of better Quality and Fortune; who becauſe they are not under a Neceſſity of making Learning their Maintenance, are eaſily allowed to paſs their Time and take their Degrees with little or no Improvement: Than which there cannot well be a greater Abſurdity. For if no Advancement of Knowledge can be had from thoſe Places, the Time there ſpent is at beſt utterly loſt, becauſe every ornamental Part of Education is better taught elſewhere: And as for keeping Youths out of Harms-way, I doubt, where ſo many of them are got together at full Liberty of doing what they pleaſe, it will not anſwer the End. But, whatever Abuſes, Corruptions, or Deviations from Statutes have crept into the Univerſities, through Neglect, or Length of Time; they might

might in a great Degree be reformed by ſtrict Injunctions from Court, (upon each Particular) to the Viſitors and Heads of Houſes; beſide the peculiar Authority the Queen may have in ſeveral Colledges, whereof Her Predeceſſors were the Founders. And among other Regulations it would be very convenient to prevent the Exceſs of Drink, with that ſcurvy Cuſtom among the Lads, and Parent of the former Vice, the taking of Tobacco, where it is not abſolutely neceſſary in Point of Health.

FROM the Univerſities, the young Nobility, and others of great Fortunes, are ſent for early up to Town, for fear of contracting any Airs of Pedantry by a Colledge Education. Many of the younger Gentry retire to the Inns of Court, where they are wholly left to their own Diſcretion. And the Conſequence

of

of this Remiſſneſs in Education appears by obſerving, that Nine in Ten of thoſe who riſe in the Church or the Court, the Law or the Army, are younger Brothers, or new Men, whoſe narrow Fortunes have forced them upon Induſtry and Application.

AS for the Inns of Court, unleſs we ſuppoſe them to be much degenerated, they muſt needs be the worſt inſtituted Seminaries in any Chriſtian Country; but whether they may be corrected without Interpoſition of the Legiſlature, I have not Skill enough to determine. However, it is certain that all wiſe Nations have agreed in the Neceſſity of a ſtrict Education, which conſiſted among other Things in the Obſervance of Moral Duties, eſpecially, Juſtice, Temperance, and Chaſtity, as well as the Knowledge of Arts,

and bodily Exercises: But all these, among us are laughed out of Doors.

WITHOUT the least Intention to offend the Clergy, I cannot but think, that through a mistaken Notion and Practice, they prevent themselves from doing much Service, which otherwise might lie in their Power, to Religion and Virtue: I mean, by affecting so much to converse with each other, and caring so little to mingle with the Laity. They have their particular Clubs, and particular Coffee-houses, where they generally appear in Clusters: A single Divine dares hardly shew his Person among Numbers of fine Gentlemen; or if he happens to fall into such Company, he is silent, and suspicious, in continual Apprehension, that some pert Man of Pleasure should break an unmannerly Jest, and render him ridiculous. Now,

I take this Behaviour of the Clergy to be just as reasonable, as if the Physicians should agree to spend their Time in visiting one another, or their several Apothecaries, and leave their Patients to shift for themselves. In my humble Opinion, the Clergy's Business lies entirely among the Laity; neither is there perhaps a more effectual Way to forward the Salvation of Mens Souls, than for spiritual Persons to make themselves as agreeable as they can in the Conversations of the World; for which a learned Education gives them great Advantage, if they would please to improve and apply it. It so happens, that the *Men of Pleasure*, who never go to Church, nor amuse themselves to read Books of Devotion, form their Idea's of the Clergy from a few poor Strolers they often observe in the Streets, or sneaking out of some Person of Quality's House,

House, where they are hired by the Lady at Ten Shillings a Month; while those of better Figure and Parts do seldom appear, to correct these Notions. And let some Reasoners think what they please, 'tis certain, that Men must be brought to esteem and love the Clergy, before they can be perswaded to be in love with Religion. No Man values the best Medicine if administred by a Physician whose Person he hates or despises. If the Clergy were as forward to appear in all Companies, as other Gentlemen, and would a little study the Arts of Conversation, to make themselves agreeable, they might be welcome at every Party, where there was the least Regard for Politeness or good Sense; and consequently prevent a thousand vicious or prophane Discourses, as well as Actions; neither would Men of Understanding com-

plain, that a Clergyman was a Conſtraint upon the Company, becauſe they could not ſpeak Blaſphemy or obſcene Jeſts before him. While the People are ſo jealous of the Clergy's Ambition, as to abhor all Thoughts of the Return of Eccleſiaſtick Diſcipline among them, I do not ſee any other Method left for Men of that Function to take, in order to reform the World, than by uſing all honeſt Arts to make themſelves acceptable to the Laity. This, no doubt, is Part of that Wiſdom of the Serpent, which the Author of Chriſtianity directs, and is the very Method uſed by St. *Paul*, who *became all Things to all Men, to the Jews a Jew, and a Greek to the Greeks.*

HOW to remedy theſe Inconveniences, may be a Matter of ſome Difficulty, ſince the Clergy ſeem to be of an Opinion, that this Humour

mour of ſequeſtring themſelves is a Part of their Duty; nay, as I remember, they have been told ſo by ſome of their Biſhops in their paſtoral Letters, particularly by *one* among them of great Merit and Diſtinction, who yet in his own Practice hath all his Life-time taken a Courſe directly contrary. But I am deceived, if an awkard Shame, and Fear of ill Uſage from the Laity, have not a greater Share in this miſtaken Conduct, than their own Inclinations: However, if the outward Profeſſion of Religion and Virtue, were once in Practice and Countenance at Court, as well as among all Men in Office, or who have any Hopes or Dependance for Preferment; a good Treatment of the Clergy would be the neceſſary Conſequence of ſuch a Reformation; and they would ſoon be wiſe enough to ſee their own Duty and Intereſt in qualifying themſelves

for Lay-Converſation, when once they were out of Fear of being chocqued by Ribaldry or Prophaneneſs.

THERE is one further Circumſtance upon this Occaſion, which I know not whether it will be very Orthodox to mention: The Clergy are the only Set of Men among us who conſtantly wear a diſtinct Habit from others: The Conſequence of which (not in Reaſon but in Fact) is this, that as long as any ſcandalous Perſons appear in that Dreſs, it will continue in ſome Degree a general Mark of Contempt. Whoever happens to ſee a *Scoundrel in a Gown*, reeling Home at Midnight (a Sight neither *frequent* nor *miraculous*) is apt to entertain an ill Idea of the whole Order, and at the ſame Time to be extreamly comforted in his own Vices. Some Remedy might be

be put to this, if those straggling Gentlemen who come up to Town to *seek their Fortunes*, were fairly dismiss'd to the *West-Indies*, where there is Work enough, and where some better Provision should be made for them, than I doubt there is at present. Or, what if no Person were allowed to wear the Habit who had not some Preferment in the Church, or at least some temporal Fortune sufficient to keep him out of Contempt? Though in my Opinion, it were infinitely better, if all the Clergy (except the Bishops) were allowed to appear like other Men of the graver Sort, unless at those Seasons when they are doing the Business of their Function.

THERE is one Abuse in this Town which wonderfully contributes to the Promotion of Vice; that such Men are often put into the Commission

Commiſſion of the Peace, whoſe Intereſt it is, that Virtue ſhould be utterly baniſhed from among us; who maintain, or at leaſt enrich themſelves by encouraging the groſſeſt Immoralities; to whom all the *Bawds* of the *Ward* pay Contribution for Shelter and Protection from the Laws. Thus theſe worthy Magiſtrates, inſtead of leſſening Enormities, are the Occaſion of juſt twice as much Debauchery as there would be without them. For thoſe infamous Women are forced upon doubling their Work and Induſtry, to anſwer double Charges, of paying the Juſtice, and ſupporting themſelves. Like Thieves, who ſcape the Gallows, and are let out to ſteal in order to diſcharge the Jaylors Fees.

IT is not to be queſtioned, but the Queen and Miniſtry might eaſily redreſs

redreſs this abominable Grievance; by enlarging the Number of Juſtices of the Peace, by endeavouring to chuſe Men of virtuous Principles, by admitting none who have not conſiderable Fortunes, perhaps by receiving into the Number ſome of the moſt eminent Clergy: Then, by forcing all of them upon ſevere Penalties, to act when there is Occaſion, and not permitting any who are offered, to refuſe the Commiſſion; but in theſe Two laſt Caſes, which are very material, I doubt there will be need of the Legiſlature.

THE Reformation of the Stage is entirely in the Power of the Queen; and in the Conſequences it hath upon the Minds of younger People, does very well deſerve the ſtricteſt Care. Beſide the undecent and prophane Paſſages; beſide the perpetual

perpetual turning into Ridicule the very Function of the Prieſthood, with other Irregularities in moſt modern Comedies, which have by others been objected to them; it is worth obſerving the diſtributive Juſtice of the Authors, which is conſtantly applied to the Puniſhment of Virtue, and the Reward of Vice; directly oppoſite to the Rules of their beſt Criticks, as well as to the Practice of dramatick Poets in all other Ages and Countries. For Example, A Country Squire, who is repreſented with no other Vice but that of being a Clown, and having the Provincial Accent upon his Tongue, which is neither a Fault, nor in his Power to remedy; muſt be condemned to marry a caſt Wench, or a crackt Chamber-maid. On the other ſide, a Rakehell of the Town, whoſe Character is ſet off with no other Accompliſhments but

excеſſive

exceſſive Prodigality, Prophaneneſs, Intemperance, and Luſt; is rewarded with the Lady of great Fortune, to repair his own, which his Vices had almoſt ruined. And as in a Tragedy, the Hero is repreſented to have obtained many Victories, in order to raiſe his Character in the Minds of the Spectators, ſo the Hero of a Comedy is repreſented to have been victorious in all his Intrigues, for the ſame Reaſon. I do not remember that our *Engliſh* Poets ever ſuffer'd a criminal Amour to ſucceed upon the Stage, 'till the Reign of King *Charles* the Second. Ever ſince that Time, the Alderman is made a Cuckold, the deluded Virgin is debauched, and Adultery and Fornication are ſuppoſed to be committed behind the Scenes, as Part of the Action. Theſe and many more Corruptions of the Theatre, peculiar to our Age and Nation,

need continue no longer than while the Court is content to connive at or neglect them. Surely a Penſion would not be ill employ'd on ſome Man of Wit, Learning, and Virtue, who might have Power to ſtrike out every offenſive or unbecoming Paſſage from Plays already written, as well as thoſe that may be offered to the Stage for the future. By which and other wiſe Regulations, the Theatre might become a very innocent and uſeful Diverſion, inſtead of being the Scandal and Reproach to our Religion and Country.

THE Propoſals I have hitherto made for the Advancement of Religion and Morality, are ſuch as come within Reach of the Adminiſtration; ſuch as a pious active Prince, with a ſteddy Reſolution might ſoon bring to Effect. Neither am I aware of any Objections to be raiſed againſt

againſt what I have advanced; unleſs it ſhould be thought, that the making Religion a neceſſary Step to Intereſt and Favour, might encreaſe Hypocriſy among us: And I readily believe it would. But if One in Twenty, ſhould be brought over to true Piety by this or the like Methods, and the other Nineteen be only Hypocrites; the Advantage would ſtill be great. Beſides, Hypocriſy is much more eligible than open Infidelity and Vice; it wears the Livery of Religion, it acknowledges her Authority, and is cautious of giving Scandal. Nay a long continued Diſguiſe, is too great a Conſtraint upon human Nature, eſpecially an *Engliſh* Diſpoſition; Men would leave off their Vices out of meer Wearineſs, rather than undergo the Toil and Hazard, and perhaps Expence, of practiſing them perpetually in private. And I believe it

is often with Religion as with Love; which by much diſſembling, at laſt grows real.

ALL other Projects to this great End have proved hitherto ineffectual. Laws againſt Immorality have not been executed; and Proclamations occaſionally iſſued out to inforce them, are wholly unregarded as Things of Form. Religious Societies, though begun with excellent Intention, and by Perſons of true Piety, have dwindled into factious Clubs; and grown a Trade to enrich little knaviſh Informers of the meaneſt Rank, ſuch as common Conſtables, and broken Shopkeepers.

AND, That ſome effectual Attempt ſhould be made towards ſuch a Reformation, is perhaps more neceſſary than People commonly apprehend; becauſe the Ruin of

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a State is generally preceeded by an univerſal Degeneracy of Manners, and Contempt of Religion; which is entirely our Caſe at preſent.

Diis te minorem, quod geris, imperas. Hor.

NEITHER is this a Matter to be deferred till a more convenient Time of Peace and Leiſure: Becauſe a Reformation in Mens Faith and Morals, is the beſt natural as well as religious Means to bring the War to a good Concluſion. For, if Men in Truſt performed their Duty for Conſcience Sake, Affairs would not ſuffer through Fraud, Falſhood, and Neglect, as they now perpetually do. And if they believed a God and His Providence, and acted accordingly, they might reaſonably hope for His divine Aſſiſtance in ſo juſt a Cauſe as ours.

NOR

NOR could the Majesty of the *English* Crown appear upon any Occasion in a greater Lustre, either to Foreigners or Subjects, than by an Administration, which producing such great Effects, would discover so much Power. And Power being the natural Appetite of Princes, a limited Monarch cannot so well gratify it in any Thing as a strict Execution of the Laws.

BESIDES; All Parties would be obliged to close with so good a Work as this, for their own Reputation: Neither is any Expedient more likely to unite them. For, the most violent Party-men I have ever observed, are such as in the Conduct of their Lives have discovered least Sense of Religion or Morality; and when all such are laid aside, at least those among them

them as ſhall be found incorrigible, it will be a Matter perhaps of no great Difficulty to reconcile the reſt.

THE many Corruptions at preſent in every Branch of Buſineſs, are almoſt inconceivable. I have heard it computed by skillful Perſons, that, of Six Millions raiſed every Year for the Service of the Publick, one Third at leaſt, is ſunk and intercepted through the ſeveral Claſſes and Subordinations of artful Men in Office, before the Remainder is applied to the proper Uſes. This is an accidental ill Effect of our Freedom. And while ſuch Men are in Truſt, who have no Check from within, nor any Views but towards their Intereſt; there is no other Fence againſt them but the Certainty of being hanged upon the firſt Diſcovery, by the arbitrary

arbitrary Will of an unlimited Monarch or his *Viſier*. Among us, the only Danger to be apprehended, is the Loſs of an Employment; and that Danger is to be eluded a Thouſand Ways. Beſides, when Fraud is great, it furniſhes Weapons to defend it ſelf: And at worſt, if, the Crimes be ſo flagrant, that a Man is laid aſide out of perfect Shame, (which rarely happens,) he retires loaded with the Spoils of the Nation; *Et fruitur Diis iratis*. I could name a Commiſſion, where ſeveral Perſons out of a Salary of Five hundred Pounds, without other viſible Revenues, have always lived at the Rate of Two thouſand, and laid out Forty or Fifty thouſand upon Purchaſes of Land or Annuities. An Hundred other Inſtances of the ſame Kind might eaſily be produced. What Remedy therefore can

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be found againſt ſuch Grievances in a Conſtitution like ours, but to bring Religion into Countenance, and encourage thoſe who from the Hope of future Reward, and Dread of future Puniſhment, will be moved to act with Juſtice and Integrity.

THIS is not to be accompliſhed any other Way, but by introducing Religion as much as poſſible to be the Turn and Faſhion of the Age; which only lies in the Power of the Adminiſtration, the Prince with utmoſt Strictneſs regulating the Court, the Miniſtry, and other Perſons in great Employment; and theſe by their Example and Authority, reforming all who have Dependance on them.

IT is certain that a Reformation ſucceſsfully carried on in this great Town, would in Time ſpread it ſelf over the whole Kingdom; ſince moſt of the conſiderable Youth paſs here that Seaſon of their Lives wherein ſtrongeſt Impreſſions are made, in order to improve their Education or advance their Fortune; and thoſe among them who return into their ſeveral Countries, are ſure to be followed and imitated as the greateſt Patterns of Wit and good Breeding.

AND if Things were once in this Train; that is, if Virtue and Religion were eſtabliſhed as the neceſſary Titles to Reputation and Preferment, and if Vice and Infidelity were not only loaded with Infamy, but made the infallible Ruin of all Mens Pretentions; our Duty

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by becoming our Interest would take Root in our Natures, and mix with the very Genius of our People, so that it would not be easy for the Example of one wicked Prince to bring us back to our former Corruptions.

I HAVE confined my self (as it is before observed) to those Methods for the Advancement of Piety, which are in the Power of a Prince limited like ours, by a strict Execution of the Laws already in force. And this is enough for a Project that comes without any Name or Recommendation; I doubt, a great deal more than will suddenly be reduced into Practice. Though, if any Disposition should appear towards so good a Work, it is certain, that the Assistance of the Legislative Power would be necessary to make it more compleat.

I will instance only a few Particulars.

IN order to reform the Vices of this Town, which as we have said, hath so mighty an Influence on the whole Kingdom; it would be very instrumental, to have a Law made that all Taverns or Ale-houses should be obliged to dismiss their Company by Twelve at Night, and shut up their Doors; and that no Woman should be suffered to enter any Tavern or Ale-house upon any Pretence whatsoever. It is easy to conceive what a Number of ill Consequences such a Law would prevent; the Mischiefs of Quarrels, and Lewdness, and Thefts, and Midnight Brawls, the Diseases of Intemperance and Venery, and a Thousand other Evils needless to mention. Nor would it be amiss if the Masters of those Publick-

Publick-houſes were obliged upon the ſevereſt Penalties to give only a proportioned Quantity of Drink to every Company, and when he found his Gueſts diſordered with Exceſs, to refuſe them any more.

I BELIEVE there is hardly a Nation in Chriſtendom where all kind of Fraud is practiced in ſo unmeaſureable a Degree as with us. The Lawyer, the Tradeſman, the Mechanick have found ſo many Arts to deceive in their ſeveral Callings, that they far outgrow the common Prudence of Mankind, which is in no Sort able to fence againſt them. Neither could the Legiſlature in any thing more conſult the Publick Good, than by providing ſome effectual Remedy againſt this Evil, which in ſeveral Caſes deſerves greater Puniſhment than many Crimes that are

capital

capital among us. The Vintner who by mixing Poiſon with his Wines, deſtroys more Lives than any one Diſeaſe in the Bill of Mortality; the Lawyer who perſwades you to a Purchaſe which he knows is mortgaged for more than the Worth, to the Ruin of you and your Family; the Goldſmith or Scrivener who takes all your Fortune to diſpoſe of, when he has before-hand reſolved to break the following Day; do ſurely deſerve the Gallows much better than the Wretch who is carried there for ſtealing a Horſe.

IT cannot eaſily be anſwered to God or Man, why a Law is not made for limiting the Preſs; at leaſt ſo far as to prevent the publiſhing of ſuch pernicious Books, as under Pretence of *free Thinking*, endeavour to overthrow thoſe Tenets in

in Religion, which have been held inviolable almoſt in all Ages by every Sect that pretend to be Chriſtian, and cannot therefore with any Colour of Reaſon be called *Points in Controverſy*, or *Matters of Speculation*, as ſome would pretend. The Doctrine of the *Trinity*, the *Divinity of Chriſt*, the *Immortality of the Soul*, and even the Truth of all Revelations, are daily exploded, and denied in Books openly printed; though it is to be ſuppoſed, neither Party will avow ſuch Principles, or own the ſupporting of them to be any way neceſſary to their Service.

IT would be endleſs to ſet down every Corruption or Defect which requires a Remedy from the Legiſlative Power. Senates are like to have little Regard for any Propoſals that come from without Doors; though

though under a due Sense of my own Inabilities, I am fully convinced that the unbiast Thoughts of an honest and wise Man employed on the Good of his Country, may be better digested than the Results of a Multitude where Faction and Interest too often prevail; as a single Guide may direct the Way, better than Five hundred who *have contrary Views*, or *look asquint*, or *shut their Eyes*.

I SHALL therefore mention but one more Particular which I think the Parliament ought to take under Consideration; whether it be not a Shame to our Country, and a Scandal to Christianity, that in many Towns where there is a prodigious Encrease in the Number of Houses and Inhabitants, so little Care should be taken for the building of Churches, that Five

Parts

Parts in Six of the People are absolutely hindred from hearing divine Service: Particularly here in *London*, where a ſingle Miniſter with One or Two ſorry Curats, hath the Care ſometimes of above Twenty Thouſand Souls incumbent on him. A Neglect of Religion, ſo ignominious in my Opinion, that it can hardly be equalled in any civilized Age or Country.

BUT, To leave theſe aity Imaginations of introducing new Laws for the Amendment of Mankind: What I principally inſiſt on is a due Execution of the old; which lies wholly in the Crown, and in the Authority derived from thence. I therefore return to my former Aſſertion; that, if Stations of Power, Truſt, Profit, and Honour were conſtantly made the Rewards of Virtue and Piety, ſuch an Admi-

niſtration muſt needs have a mighty Influence on the Faith and Morals of the whole Kingdom; And Men of great Abilities would *then* endeavour to excell in the Duties of a religious Life, in order to qualify themſelves for publick Service. Perhaps I may be wrong in ſome of the Means I preſcribe towards this End; but that is no material Objection againſt the Deſign it ſelf. Let thoſe who are at the Helm, contrive it better, which perhaps they may eaſily do. Every Body will agree that the Diſeaſe is manifeſt, as well as dangerous, that ſome Remedy is neceſſary, and that none yet applied hath been effectual, which is a ſufficient Excuſe for any Man who wiſhes well to his Country, to offer his Thoughts, when he can have no other End in View but the Publick Good. The preſent Queen is a Prince of as

many and great Virtues as ever filled a Throne: How would it brighten Her Character to the preſent and after Ages, if She would exert Her utmoſt Authority to inſtill ſome Share of thoſe Virtues into Her People, which they are too degenerate to learn only from Her Example. And, be it ſpoke with all the Veneration poſſible for ſo excellent a Soveraign, Her beſt Endeavours in this weighty Affair are a moſt important Part of Her Duty as well as Her Intereſt, and Her Honour.

BUT, It muſt be confeſt, that as Things are now, every Man thinks he has laid in a ſufficient Stock of Merit, and may pretend to any Employment, provided he has been loud and frequent in declaring himſelf hearty for the Government. 'Tis true, he is a *Man*

of *Pleasure*, and a *Free Thinker*, that is, in other Words, he is profligate in his Morals, and a Despiser of Religion; but in Point of Party, he is one to be *confided* in; he is an Asserter of Liberty and Property; he rattles it out against *Popery* and *arbitrary Power*, and *Priest-craft*, and *High-Church*. 'Tis enough: He is a Person fully qualified for any Employment in the Court or the Navy, the Law, or the Revenue; where he will be sure to leave no Arts untried of Bribery, Fraud, Injustice, Oppression, that he can practice with any Hope of Impunity. No wonder such Men are true to a Government, where Liberty runs high, where Property however attained, is so well secured, and where the Administration is at least so gentle: 'Tis impossible they could chuse any other Constitution without changing to their Loss.

FIDELITY

FIDELITY to a preſent Eſtabliſhment is indeed the principal Means to defend it from a foreign Enemy, but without other Qualifications will not prevent Corruptions from within; and States are oftner ruined by theſe than the other.

TO conclude. Whether the Propoſals I have offered towards a Reformation, be ſuch as are moſt prudent and convenient, may probably be a Queſtion; but it is none at all, whether ſome Reformation be abſolutely neceſſary; becauſe the Nature of Things is ſuch, that if Abuſes be not remedied, they will certainly encreaſe, nor ever ſtop till they end in the Subverſion of a Commonwealth. As there muſt always of neceſſity be ſome Corruptions, ſo in a well inſtituted State, the executive Power will be always contending

contending againſt them, by *reducing Things* (as *Machiavel* ſpeaks) *to their firſt Principles*, never letting Abuſes grow inveterate, or multiply ſo far that it will be hard to find Remedies, and perhaps impoſſible to apply them. As he that would keep his Houſe in Repair, muſt attend every little Breach or Flaw, and ſupply it immediately; elſe Time alone will bring all to ruin, how much more the common Accidents of Storms and Rain: He muſt live in perpetual Danger of his Houſe falling about his Ears; and will find it cheaper to throw it quite down, and build it again from the Ground; perhaps upon a new Foundation, or at leaſt in a new Form, which may neither be ſo ſafe nor ſo convenient as the old.

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